

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	26/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC032058
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Buckinghamshire County Council
Registered person address	Chief Officer, County Hall, Walton Street, AYLESBURY, Buckinghamshire, HP20 1UA

Responsible individual	Karen Dolton
Registered manager	Post Vacant
Inspector	Trish Palmer

Inspection date	26/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC032058

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The staff are committed to working with the young people.
- Young people's friends are encouraged to visit the home.
- Staff understand the importance of education and there are good links with education providers.
- The young people have a good relationship with staff.
- Staff are enthusiastic and work hard to give young people positive experiences.
- Young people say they feel safe living in the home.
- Staff recognise and celebrate young people's achievements.
- Staff recognise that transitions can be difficult for young people and work closely with young people, families and social workers.
- Parents receive regular updates.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must give notice in writing to HMCI, as soon as it is reasonably practicable to do so, if any of the following events take place or are expected by the registered person to take place— (a) a person other than the registered person carries on or manages the children's home; (Regulation 49(a))	10/10/15
The registered person must— (a) keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and (b) notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))	30/10/2015
To meet the fire precautions regulation the registered person must ensure that they: take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. This relates to a fire door that needs to be replaced. (Regulation 25 (1)(a))	03/09/2015
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	10/10/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

Ensure recruitment safeguards young people; in particular retain a record in the home confirming that all safer recruitment checks have been obtained for all staff. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, page 61, paragraph 13)

Ensure that all staff consistently follow the homes policies and procedures; in particular acquire and use an accident book as outlined in the homes policy. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, page 54, paragraph 10.20)

Young people should have the opportunity to comment on and sign their placement plan (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, page 18, paragraph 3.31)

Full report

Information about this children's home

is is a local authority children's home, providing residential care for up to six young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/09/2014	Full	Good
17/10/2013	Interim	Satisfactory progress
30/04/2013	Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>The young people have developed good relationships with the staff. One young person gave a member of staff a hug, telling her that he was pleased she was working today. Another commented that 'there are always staff I can talk to and they listen.'</p> <p>Staff have good knowledge of the young people, why they are in care, and what their current needs are. Staff respect the young people and treat them as individuals.</p> <p>The young people have regular key work sessions. Staff tailor these around the young person and they are often completed whilst out on one-to-ones with staff in order to establish and maintain good relationships.</p> <p>Young people have detailed care plans, which help staff in being able to support them with all aspects of their lives. However, the evidence trail of their involvement is limited, young people are not asked to sign their care plans to demonstrate that they have read and understood them.</p> <p>Staff complete individual monthly newsletters for the young people with photos of activities, achievements and any significant events. Young people take these when they leave, giving them positive memories of their time in the home.</p> <p>There is a reward system in place individualised for each young person setting out expectations and targets. Staff review these with them on a weekly basis to determine next steps and secure progress.</p> <p>Staff have good relationships with parents, one parent commented 'I am always made to feel welcome when I visit and have stayed for tea, staff always keep me updated'. Another said that 'X has done really well living here and has really turned things around'. Another parent reported that the change in manager has been difficult for X as she had a good relationship with the old manager, her keyworker has supported her with this'.</p> <p>Young people's health needs are well promoted. They are registered with the local GP, dentist and opticians and are supported to attend routine health appointments. The looked after children's nurse completes an annual health assessment. Staff support young people in accessing specialist services such as sexual health and drug and alcohol workers.</p>	

Staff encourage and enable young people to have contact with friends outside of the home. A young person was arranging with the manager for a friend to come to the home for the afternoon. Another was going to a festival with a friend for the weekend.

The young people are given opportunities to access a wide range of activities; staff plan these with young people to ensure that they have positive experiences and opportunities to try new things. Staff acknowledge the importance of celebrating young people's achievements, there are certificates displayed in the home.

Staff actively seek and act on young people's opinions on how to improve their environment. Young people were given the opportunity to go with staff and choose a new sofa. One young person went and took photos to show the others, and they made a choice from these. A young person stated that 'I picked the colour for my room when I first came in but I want to change it now, I have spoken to my keyworker and she is going to arrange this for me'. Another young person looks after the garden and staff ensure that he chooses plants and vegetables that he wants to grow. He stated 'staff know that I like to look after the garden, I'm in charge of making it look nice'.

Staff see education as an important part of the young people's lives. They have a good working relationship with education providers and the young people regularly attend and are doing well. One young person recently sat her GCSEs, staff are very proud of her achievement.

Staff effectively support contact with family. One parent commented that 'staff support me with contact, if I need to bring X back early there is never a problem with this'.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>The young people know how to complain and feel listened to. One young person commented that 'staff here do listen to you and sort things out.'</p> <p>Staff promote an open culture in which young people are positively encouraged to air their views and opinions. Staff challenge all forms of bullying and discrimination; and discussions take place in the young people's meetings, which they chair. An advocate visits the home monthly to meet with them and reports any issues or concerns to the manager, in agreement with the young people.</p>	

Bullying is also a standing item on the staff meeting agenda. The young people are offered an independent visitor who will meet with them on a regular basis. Two young people have taken up this opportunity.

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place when young people first arrive, based on information from the referral. Staff amend and update these when needed and use them well to inform their work with young people.

Staff have a sound understanding of health and safety, including knowledge of potential issues in the local area. All routine servicing and monitoring checks are up to date, for example staff complete weekly fire checks and the young people have monthly fire drills. Fire safety has been compromised by the lack of a fire door at the top of the stairs. The manager has been trying to arrange this for several weeks. It is now a matter of urgency.

Staff have a good understanding of the safeguarding policy and are vigilant around any issues of potential child sexual exploitation and report and record this appropriately.

Staff actively look for young people when they go missing, on their return they will check that young people are well and try to ascertain where they have been. Young people receive a return to home interview from an independent person.

The manager is rebuilding the previously good links with the local police officer. He is again visiting the home on a more regular basis to build relationships with the young people and staff.

There are appropriate security measures on the front door, some of the bedrooms have window restrictors. A young person left the home using a window. Staff are working with the young person to reflect on the impact on others should a restrictor be fitted.

Staff implement robust medication policy and procedures to ensure that the right medicine is given at the right time. All medication is stored and recorded appropriately.

The home has good links with the local authority designated officer who said 'we have a good relationship with the home, I went out a while ago to talk to the staff about the role of the LADO and to talk to them about child protection, I have no concerns about the home, and I am confident they would report any issues should they arise'. A parent commented 'I feel that X is safe here, staff keep me updated about any issues'. A social worker commented 'staff know X very well, he feels safe here and likes the staff'.

Staff understand the trigger points and behaviours of young people and support them in looking at how they can manage and change their behaviours. A social

worker observed 'X can be very volatile, he is beginning to stabilise, staff know him and help him to manage his behaviours'.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
<p>The Registered Manager left the home in May 2015, there is a temporary interim manager in post. The statement of purpose and function does not reflect this, nor does it take into account the new regulations.</p> <p>There has been a significant change in staffing since the last inspection. Staff reported that morale at the beginning of the year was low; the manager has worked with staff to address this. Staff received very limited formal supervision between February and late March this year. Since that time, the new manager has made some improvement, but it remains the case that approximately half the staff have not had supervision at the expected frequency in the last three months and some have had none. The manager has provided informal supervision and staff have felt further supported by regular team meetings and daily handovers. Staff have regular training, including a range of mandatory courses, which they discuss in staff meetings to enhance their practice.</p> <p>The manager has a good understanding of the young people and proactively challenges the local authority when she feels that the plans for the young person need reviewing. This has resulted in planning meetings taking place and young people having clear plans, especially around transitions. There have been three complaints from young people since the last full inspection. These have been appropriately resolved.</p> <p>The home is maintained to a good standard and has a homely feel, one parent commented 'the home doesn't feel like a children's home, it's not clinical and has a lovely welcoming feel to it'.</p> <p>The evidence of the full range of recruitment checks undertaken is not systematically retained in the home, but in the local authority's headquarters. This means the manager cannot objectively confirm the safety of recruitment although the system used is sound.</p> <p>The manager undertakes regular monitoring and is leading the staff team in looking at how changes can be implemented to improve the running of the home. They have started work on stream lining paper work, to improve ease of access to relevant information.</p>	

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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